

- 186 weakening of the Russian control which resulted from Russia's defeat
 668 by Japan; the revolution which spread throughout the Empire in 1905 had its repercussions in the Baltic Provinces. In Latvia and Estonia there were peasant risings which developed into *jacqueries* of a peculiarly savage character; harvests were burnt, agricultural machines were destroyed, and considerable damage was done to the large German-Balt and ecclesiastical estates. In Latvia the rising was not only the work of the peasantry, but also of the Social-Democratic party and of a nationalist revolutionary movement known as the *Savieniba*. Petitions were addressed to the Russian Government for universal franchise, freedom of the press and of assembly, the right to teach Lettish in the schools, &c.; and a [665] Provisional Revolutionary Government was established in Riga. In Lithuania two congresses were summoned to meet simultaneously in Vilna on December 4, 1905; one, consisting of representatives of all the Lithuanian associations, elected Dr. Basanavicius as its president, and voted a resolution demanding the creation of an autonomous Lithuania within ethnographic limits. The other, a congress of the Peasant Union which had been founded by a certain Gabrys, decided not to pay any taxes, to dismiss Russian teachers and pro-Russian municipal authorities, and to establish Lithuanian courts.
- 661 The disturbances were finally suppressed with the utmost ruthlessness by Russian troops, with the assistance of the German Barons; 3,000 Letts were said to have been tried by court martial, about half their number being sentenced to death. The promises made by the Tsar in the stress of the emergency were not kept, or kept only in part, although each of the Provinces was allowed to send representatives to the Russian Duma which was now brought into existence.
- [667] Under the Stolypin Government severe measures of repression were introduced; many of the nationalist leaders, such as Karl Ulmanis in Latvia and Konstantin Paets in Estonia, were driven into exile, and a system of colonization was introduced with the object of encouraging a German 'non-native' class of small-holders which would [186] tend to support the *status quo*. None the less, in spite of the Russian Government's repressive policy, the national spirit which had failed to carry the day in 1905 survived, in one form or another, until the world upheaval in 1914 provided the occasion for a fresh outburst of activity.

II. THE WORLD WAR AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE INDEPENDENT STATES

- 726 Four factors contributed to the making of the new Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania during the World War: the fall of the Russian Empire; the German occupation of the border provinces

●726 during the early stages of the Bolshevik Revolution; the fall of the German Empire; and, lastly, the determination of the leaders and soldiers of the Baltic peoples themselves. All but the last of these were events of world magnitude, and beyond the power of those peoples to initiate or to prevent.

726 The military history of the Baltic Provinces in the World War may
648 be divided into three phases, corresponding with the three successive tides of armies surging forward, back, and then forward once more, across the border country between Germany and Russia proper.

First, there was the period—short for Lithuania and Courland in the south, relatively long for Livonia and Estonia farther north—when these Provinces were still held by the Russian armies, in whose ranks the Baltic peoples fought loyally.¹ Then came the period of the retreat of the Russians, devastating the country-side as they went, with the Germans hard at their heels. Lithuania and Courland were overrun by German troops by the autumn of 1915. The German advance then came to a halt for a time, and the Russians consolidated their position on a line Riga-Dvinsk-Baranovitchi, which they held for two years. The disintegration of the Russian forces as a result of the March Revolution of 1917 gave opportunity for a fresh drive. On September 3 Ludendorff captured Riga, and by February 1918 the Germans were occupying Livonia and Estonia, and were within a hundred miles of Petrograd. By the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which they were forced to sign on March 3, 1918, the Bolsheviks recognized a temporary German 'police occupation' in Estonia and Livonia until peace and order should have been restored,² and ceded to Germany all territories west of the line Riga-Dvinsk-Lyda-Pruzhany, including Courland and Lithuania. It was stated that 'Germany and Austria-Hungary intend to decide the future fate of these territories in harmony with their population'. Although this treaty was eventually rendered ineffective by subsequent events, it is significant as revealing the real nature of Germany's aims at expansion in Eastern Europe.³

Finally, with the military defeat of Germany by the Allies and the signature of the Armistice on November 11, 1918, a new phase began, in which the German armies gradually evacuated the Provinces, while the Bolsheviks poured in. This last period was the most terrible of all for the Baltic peoples, who had at the same time to fight the

¹ The part played by two Lettish battalions in the defence of Mitau led, in July 1915, to Russian permission for the formation of a small Lettish national army which distinguished itself on various occasions, and especially by its gallant defence of Riga in 1917.

² By the supplementary Agreement of Berlin on August 27, 1918, the R.S.F.S.R. renounced its sovereign rights over Estonia and Livonia.

³ For a discussion of the implications of the Brest-Litovsk Treaty see J. W. Wheeler-Bennett, *The Forgotten Peace: Brest-Litovsk* (to be published in September 1938 by Macmillan & Co.).

- 726 Germans and repel the Bolshevik invasion. Without the assistance,
648 inadequate though it was, of the Allied Powers, they could hardly
have succeeded in establishing their independence.

1. THE FALL OF THE IMPERIAL GOVERNMENT IN RUSSIA, 1917

648 It seems clear that, in the days following the March Revolution
186 and the establishment of the Provisional Government in Russia in the
spring of 1917, none of the Baltic Provinces contemplated or desired
complete detachment from Russia, although they certainly seized
the opportunity of making a bid for a measure of autonomy and for
much-needed reforms. It was the Bolshevik Revolution at the end of
the year that not only enabled, but even forced, them to go farther
and to demand complete independence.

648 *Estonia.* The Estonians, who at the time of the March Revolution
186 were as yet free from German occupation, naturally profited the
most by the new situation. At the request of their leaders, Prince
642 Lvov issued a decree or 'Special Law' on April 12 granting local
autonomy to Estonia, including the island of Oesel and the northern
half of Livonia, where the population was Estonian; the old *Landtag*
and other local bodies were replaced by a purely titular High Com-
missioner, to be appointed by the Provisional Government, and it
was provided that an Estonian National Council and subordinate
local bodies should be elected by universal, direct, secret, and pro-
portional suffrage. The National Council was to draft a constitution
for approval by an All-Russian Constituent Assembly. The pro-
visional Government appointed M. Jaan Poska, the mayor of Reval,
as High Commissioner, and by a further decree of July 5, 1917, pro-
vided for the elections to the National Council on July 7-8. In the
Council, which met on July 14 and elected M. Konstantin Paets as
its president, the bourgeois parties and the Labour Group held 60 per
cent. of the seats, the Social-Democrats and Social-Revolutionaries
making up the remaining 40 per cent. In view of the increasingly
serious military situation, the Estonian Administration also obtained
permission from Petrograd, in the autumn, to organize Estonian
contingents under their own officers.

When the Provisional Government gave way before the Bolshevik
coup d'état in November 1917, the Estonian National Government,
taking advantage of Trotsky's declaration of the right of self-deter-
mination for dissident nationalities, proclaimed complete political
independence of Russia on November 28. The Proclamation¹ also
provided for the immediate election of a Constituent Assembly and
for the delegation of the Council's powers, 'during the interruption

¹ For text see N. W. Graham, *New Governments of Eastern Europe* (I. Pitman & Sons, Ltd., 1928), p. 646.

⁶⁴⁸ wars, and of the Third Partition of Poland, all three countries were ceded to Russia. At first the Czars governed rather benevolently, but by the middle of the nineteenth century the ¹⁷⁵ three had been absorbed into the "Northwest Territory"; and stern measures of Russification were resorted to. In Lithuania, for example, only Russian might be spoken. Monastic schools were closed. The Polish and Lithuanian languages were forbidden. Many thousands of persons were deported.

⁶⁴⁸ After World War I broke out, the three suffered by reason ⁷²⁶ of the wavering fortunes of the belligerents. In 1918 they ¹⁷⁵ were the scene of sanguinary fighting between remnants of the German army, invading Bolshevik troops, and hastily formed armies of national liberation. The Poles also intervened. Finally, however, all three states were declared independent, and governments were formed. A period of uneasy tranquility followed, but the predominatingly peasant population achieved a measure of prosperity. Then the Pact of August, 1939, between Stalin and Hitler and the subsequent erasure of Poland from the map of Europe inaugurated intense tribulation along the Baltic. Germans were evacuated from Latvia and Estonia. All three Republics were compelled to sign agreements with Russia permitting the establishment of military bases. Thousands fled, and countless other thousands were deported. Next came the aftermath of the Nazi declaration of war on Russia. In a very short time Hitler had the Baltic coasts under his heel, and the expulsion and liquidation of Jews began. Finally the German armies retreated, the Russians entered, and the status of the "Northwest Territory" was restored.

⁶⁴² Elections followed, and as a matter of course pro-Com-
⁷⁹⁴ munist governments were established. It should be noted that only in Estonia had a native minority of any size favored the Communist cause. Moreover, the religious affiliations of the